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*The World's Most Significant Thought and Action*



# I KNOW HOW MOSCOW CONFESSES

• Ciliga

I PROPOSE in this article to speak exclusively of the methods and means of judiciary inquest as I have personally observed them in the U.S.S.R. Of the nine years I lived in Russia (from October 1926 to December 1935), five and one-half were spent in prisons and deportation camps. I therefore had the opportunity to see things.

The question of the methods of judiciary procedure assumes at present a general importance. It sheds light on the last Moscow trial. It bares, in part, the mechanism of the recent monstrous accusations and even more monstrous confessions. It brings out the scareful role played by judges and the grotesque conduct of the accused in such affairs.

The Moscow trial was only the last of a series of *tendances* political trials that I had the opportunity to study on the spot. The means of preparing and staging the preceding trials (against the engineers in 1929 and 1930, against the Russian social-democrats in 1931) were merely perfected and pushed to an absurdity in the last affairs. It is precisely the absurd element in the staging of the last trials that has provoked a break in world public opinion, and posed before all the question: What is happening in the U.S.S.R.? What is the origin of that moral impasse reached by the Stalin regime?

Evidently the fundamental cause of what is happening now in the U.S.S.R., including the possibility of staging such trials, is sought and can only be found in the general living conditions of the country, in the general situation of Russian society, in its profound post-revolutionary weariness, in its moral decomposition and decline. Only the general situation can explain the use, and to a certain extent the successful use, of the particular court procedure I myself have had the occasion to observe.

Let me turn immediately to my own experience.

I was arrested on the 21st of May 1930, in the middle of the night. That is a general rule. Arrests and searches are made at night, secretly so to speak, in perfect quiet. The purpose of this secretiveness is to weaken the will to resist of the arrested. The arrest order shown to me stated no reason for the arrest. There was nothing accidental about this. It is a general rule.

I was taken to prison in a private cab. This "privilege" is explained by the fact that I was living then, in Leningrad, in a palace where all the "tops" of the party, with Kirov at their head, were comfortably installed. The appearance of a closed "cell" carriage in front of the "Party House" would have caused too great a sensation. Everything I have had the opportunity to see in Russia has led me to the conviction that the fundamental tactical rule of bureaucratic "justice" is the following. Any molestation, any lie, any sort of violence, is permissible. But it must be committed without hubbub, without a scandal. Appearances must be preserved.

On the way to jail, the cab took in another prisoner: my comrade, the Yugoslav worker Deditch, who lived with me.

We were led to the office. The atmosphere of the prison office, the voice and gestures of the secretary, the mechanism of the entire procedure made me think of the prison offices I had seen abroad. "Just like the bourgeois police," I whispered to Deditch.

The third night of my stay in prison, I was called before the examining judge. That is a general rule of the G.P.U.: to call the arrested for a questioning at night. The interrogation is more oppressive during the night. A sleepy man is less self-possessed, less prepared to resist. Psychology is the preferred science of the G.P.U. experts.

"You know why you have been arrested? No, you don't know? Why do you suppose, then?"

These were the first questions. Some time later, while in prison, I read a study on the Spanish Inquisition and, to my great surprise, learned that those were also the first classic questions of the examiners acting for the Inquisition.

I knew the reason for my arrest. It was my connection with the Russian Trotskyite opposition, which was then already prohibited and whose activity was therefore illegal. But I did not want to let on to the examiner as long as the G.P.U. did not show that it knew. Furthermore, the question that interested me especially at that moment was to find out how the G.P.U. had learned of my connection with the banned oppositionists.

Since I refused to speak about that which interested the G.P.U., they soon let me see the proofs in their possession. I first realized then what an important role is played by official provocation in contemporary Russia. The individual who had effected the liaison between our group and the oppositional center of Moscow, as well as the person who had led, in the capacity of a representative of that center, discussions with our group, were both agents-provocateurs. Some members of our own circle also proved themselves to be police spies. In fact, our little group of ten sure comrades was surrounded by ten secret agents, who controlled every step of ours.

There was no longer any reason for continuing to deny my participation in the opposition movement. The G.P.U. then proposed that I answer in writing these two questions: 1. What were my political opinions? 2. What did my illegal oppositional activity consist of? I answered the first question fully. I refused to answer the second question, as it meant betraying my comrades. My declaration was sent to Moscow, where my fate was to be decided.

Days in prison passed. I was to experience soon something that is absolutely inconceivable in Western Europe, but which in Russia is an ordinary, a most "normal" event. The examining judge called for me and proposed that I leave the opposition and condemn publicly its activity. For that he promised to grant me my freedom.

"Please," I replied, "how can I do such a thing? I know that you persecute the oppositionists for their activity, and now when I must bear the consequences of this activity, you propose to me to recant and buy my liberty at such a price? That would not be honest. I should be ashamed of myself. I'd merit your own contempt."

"Oh, no, Anton Antonovich," answered the examiner. "There is nothing dishonorable about renouncing one's errors. A person may take a false step and move back when he sees where that leads."

What is especially striking is that in the period of 1929-1930 neither the G.P.U. nor any other party organ insisted on a change of viewpoint. All they asked for was a *declaration*. Privately, they even conceded that the opposition could be right "in certain things." But they, nevertheless, insisted most in-



transigently that the official declarations should contain the very opposite: that the official party machine was 100% right and the opposition 100% wrong. This was asked for "in order to safeguard and strengthen the authority of the party." This fact is very important for understanding the mechanism of political and social life in the U.S.S.R. *The Russian Communists are absolutely impregnated, or, to speak more exactly, infected, with the theory of the "two truths" one, the "true truth" meant for the initiate, for the restricted circle of the country's directors, and the other the "lie-truth," better suited for the great mass of the people.*

In its later evolution, this philosophy of the two truths has led to the general lie that is now impregnating all social life in Soviet Russia. It has brought the hypocritical, lying declarations and confessions and the strange trials of the most recent "penitents."

After two months in prison, I happened to meet my comrade Deditch. He recited to me a series of propositions that had been made to him by the examining judge. They were just like those offered to me. The examiner told him (which the G.P.U. knew through an agent provocateur) that Deditch was no longer a member of our group. He offered Deditch liberty if he spoke "with an open heart" about the various group tie-ups (which the provocateur and therefore the G.P.U. did not know). When Deditch refused to betray the comrades who had not as yet been arrested, the examiner made him a "concession." He promised Deditch liberty if he signed a declaration in which he would qualify the work of our group as counter-revolutionary and would brand me and our Yugoslav comrade Dragitch as two counter-revolutionaries. Deditch answered that in spite of the partial differences separating him from us, he considered us to be his comrades and honest revolutionists. He refused to continue a conversation on the subject of the proposed declaration. After that Deditch's fate was definitely tied to ours.

As may be gathered from the mentioned cases, the examiners sought to utilize the moral and political decomposition of the Communists arrested. The attempt was made to have the prisoners betray their own comrades. If they did not consent to this, the authorities tried to have them turn renegade. For the price of public condemnation of their comrades and of their own ideas, even though there was no actual change of beliefs on the part of the prisoners, they were offered liberty, work and often a career.

But at that time Communists were not yet forced to furnish false testimony about themselves or others, and torture was not employed to make them more amenable. Depositions and torture were, however, employed with non-Communists. That took place under my very eyes. My protests were, of course, of no avail.

People continue to ask me with a sort of perplexedness:

"Are tortures and false depositions, used in the Soviet Union? Are they used systematically?"

Before being put in prison, I not only doubted this but believed that such affirmations were only malicious calumny directed against Russia, even against Stalin's Russia.

The following happened during my first imprisonment. There were two of us in the cell. One evening my companion put his hand to his ear. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Don't you hear a dull noise?" he answered. Really, from an end of the corridor came stifled sounds. "What is it?" I asked. "Somebody is being tortured."

I was indignant: "I can understand that abroad such petty-bourgeois tales are spread concerning the G.P.U., but it's a shame to repeat these stories here in Russia. Come on, the G.P.U. is

not the Tsarist Okhrana! It is understood that the G.P.U. kills when it must. It annihilates, but it does not torture."

My companion looked at me suspiciously. He did not know what to think of me. Then he said: "I wish you remain long enough in the hands of the G.P.U. You will find out what it does or does not do. You, foreign Communists, know nothing. If a Russian Communist told me that, I would simply stop talking to him."

When I was taken from the narrow cell to the "free" part of the prison, where I could meet four or five hundred other prisoners, I gradually came to distinguish reality. I found myself in a wing of this "free" section that consisted of five or six terribly crowded large cells. The cell in which I stayed was meant for twenty-three prisoners, but it contained about a hundred. Deditch's cell held sixty-five, though it was apparently meant for fourteen. All the cells in the same wing took their walk at the same time.

The social composition of the numerous population of the wing was quite varied. It was representative of all the regions of the country, of all classes and social groupings. At that time the prison was full of engineers and "saboteurs". Discontented workers, sailors, oppositional Communists were found alongside "speculators" and priests.

Among the engineers there were some who had "confessed" their participation in sabotage. We were in the period of the monstrous "sabotage" trials.

Little by little, with some difficulty, I learned the story of their troubles: their connection with "sabotage."

"They kept me for five months in isolation," one of those who had confessed told me, "without newspapers, without anything to read, without mail, without any contact with the outside, without a visit from my family. I was hungry. I suffered from solitude. They insisted I should confess to an act of sabotage that had never taken place. I refused to assume the guilt for crimes that had not even been committed. But I was told that if I was really for the Soviet Power, as I said I was, I should confess to the charge, as the Soviet Power needed my confession. I was assured that I should have no fear of the consequences. The Soviet Power would take into consideration my open-hearted confession and give me the chance to work and repair my mistakes with work. As soon as I confessed, I'd have visits from my family, correspondence, walks, newspapers. But if I remained obstinate and persisted in saying nothing, I should have to bear pitiless repression. Not only I, but my wife and my children . . . For months, I resisted. But the situation became unbearable. Nothing, it seemed to me, could be worse. At any rate, I actually became indifferent to what people might say. I signed every statement offered by the examining judge."

After this engineer "confessed," the G.P.U. really gave him all they had promised. That way, no less than by terror, the G.P.U. buy human beings, leading them little by little on the road to lying declarations. But morally the engineer was completely crushed by his conduct. He walked about the cell like a man with a broken heart. And that is the crisis that must have been suffered by many accused who had saved themselves by falsely confessing to "sabotage." Sometimes this moral crisis ended in suicide, but that is another topic. That belongs under the heading of "consequences."

I do not want to say that there were not among the engineers isolated cases of espionage and sabotage. But it is absolutely certain that the general sabotage plot described for the country and the world by means of the confessions given at the show-trials was non-existent. Immediately after his trial the well-



known professor Ramsin was freed and continued his lectures at the Institute.

After passing several months at the side of the "sabotaging" engineers, I recognized that what we had here was not an honest, though pitiless, terror but a lugubrious terror combined with the most detestable extortion. It was as if the State said to its adversaries: "Do what we ask you to do. Sell your conscience and your honor. Assume the guilt for crimes you have never committed. And you will receive in recompense the best things in the world."

If you ask me what was the aim of this method, I can answer in a few words that at the period in question it was a specific act in the political struggle led by the party bureaucracy against the non-party specialists. The matter was important enough. The specialists dreamt—and their dream appeared at that time to have chances of being realized—that the peasants, revolting against the forced collectivization, would overthrow the power of the "Communist" bureaucracy. They thought that this would lead to a government of engineers, a government of specialists. The Stalinist power, on its side, wanted not only to destroy its enemies physically but to compromise them morally—all of this with the help of the show-trials and the false confessions. The Stalinist government aspired at the same time to lay on its political enemies the complete responsibility for the economic and political difficulties that overwhelmed the country.

Among the other inmates in the Leningrad prison, was a group of persons arrested on account of the gold question. At that time there were numerous arrests of people suspected of possessing gold, objects of art, etc. The following was the procedure followed with them. During their night searches, the G.P.U. picked up all articles of value found in the apartment, from silver spoons to art objects. The possessors of these articles were taken to prison, no matter what was the result of the search. They were asked to make a gift to the State, in behalf of the Five Year Plan, of all valuables found and those they were suspected of hiding. The excuse seems almost plausible. But consider the conditions under which it was made.

These unfortunates remained standing in the corridors before the offices of the examining judges for whole days, without food, without sleep, so that the G.P.U. might better extract from them the "gift to the Five Year Plan." I was able to see groups of those people when I myself was called to the G.P.U. examiner. A young dentist, who shared my cell, had to remain standing for forty-eight hours before the G.P.U. examiner's door. At the end of the forty-eight hours, his florid face became earthen and livid. One of the men standing in the corridor went insane.

"Look, blood!" he exclaimed in terror, pointing somewhere in the corridor. The G.P.U. left him in that condition for the next twenty-four hours, in order to shatter through this frightening sight, the resistance of those who were not yet ready to make gifts to the Five Year Plan.

Later, I met in Siberia people, mostly old men and women, who were kept for ten to twenty days in unheated houses, with windows open to the Siberian cold—old men and women who were dying from hunger, who were refused water to drink, to get from them the gold they were supposed to possess.

What seemed to me most abject was the procedure followed in procuring these gifts to the State. Giving up their gold or other valuables, the unfortunate people were forced to sign this sort of declaration: "I offer, spontaneously and voluntarily, this sum to the fund for socialist industrialization." Persons arrested and subjected to such tortures were forced to sign, when freed from prison, a declaration affirming that they would never speak

to anybody what happened to them, about what they had seen and heard in prison. When I learned of the Stalinist manner of getting gold by brutal violence, I recalled to myself the Spanish conquistadores, who used analogous methods to get gold from the unfortunate Indians.

I was enabled to observe the application of these tortures to others than suspected possessors of gold. I myself witnessed interrogations that went on for sixteen to twenty-four hours without interruption. The examining judges were changed periodically so that they might remain fresh and able to concentrate, or the accused was subjected to simultaneous questioning by several examiners. Such a procedure is always sure to shake the nerves of the accused. A member of a certain religious sect returned to our cell after undergoing such an examination. He was already sick before. There was little life in him after the last experience. He threw himself on the meal we prepared for him. He took off his shoes. He fell on the bed offered to him by another prisoner. But he did not rest for ten minutes when there came a knock on the door and the warden took him out for a new interrogation by the G.P.U. examiners.

I was rather grieved by these things. Up to then I would have never believed that they could happen in Soviet Russia. I even had a good opinion of the G.P.U. I was now in the position to convince myself that the degeneration of the Soviet Power, formerly revolutionary, had reached a degree that I never could have imagined. I was astonished. I was so affected that, taking the first opportunity I got (that is, my own examination) I shouted to the G.P.U. my protest against such injustice, against all this torture, all the lying accusations and no less lying "confessions."

"What are you doing?" I told him. "We always defend you outside of Russia, and here you are committing acts that I never would have thought possible if I did not see them with my own eyes. You are compromising both the revolution and socialism. Through your methods, you are transforming the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and the non-party intellectuals into mortal enemies of the revolution and socialism."

The examining judge could not deny the acts that had taken place in his presence. He explained and excused such practices with the following words:

"But with you and revolutionaries in general we never employ these methods. Against the petty-bourgeoisie, they are indispensable. We must not forget that the country finds itself now in a sharp class struggle." No matter how sharp the struggle of classes, I could not conceive that the socialist and proletarian power could stoop to so low and deceitful methods of struggle.

The last Moscow trial has showed, however, that shameful practices that were employed at first only against non-Communists soon came to be applied against members of the Communist Party too. Moreover, I can state that even in the earlier period the inquisitorial manner I have described were used not only on non-proletarian elements but also on workers.

One day there was brought into our cell a sailor who had just arrived from an "isolator" (Soviet concentration camp). He was a young vigorous fellow. During his detention in an isolated cell, the G.P.U. had tried to tear from him a confession to his—fictitious—participation in a—fictitious—plot against Stalin. The G.P.U. attempted to get what it asked for in the usual inquisitorial fashion. He was called from his cell several times during the night. He was told that he was going to be shot because of his criminal stubbornness. He was taken into the yard, put against the wall and then—brought back to his cell.

(Continued on page 26)



## TO MAKE SPAIN SAFE

• Roberto

*What is behind the suppression of the P. O. U. M. in Madrid? Is there a "war" looming between the C. N. T. and the Spanish Communists? Why has the Valencia government sabotaged the Aragon Front, though an adequate campaign in the Zaragoza-Huesca region might have ended the civil war? Has Stalin's international staff put the strait-jacket on the Spanish Revolution? What is the game played by Eden, Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin over bleeding Spain? In this communication, Roberto speaks frankly about things without the knowledge of which the Spanish situation remains unintelligible. We have been obliged to carry over the remaining part of this article to the early March issue, which will, however, include its immediate sequel.*

WHEN IN my last doleful communication I posed at the suggestion of one of your correspondents, the question: "What will happen after the victory over the military-reactionary rebels?", I did not intend to express my belief in the certainty of a loyalist victory. The fact is that it is necessary to deal with the question especially because it is already being posed by the acts of certain important sectors of the anti-rebel front: the present S.P.-C.P.-Bourgeois Republican combination, the C. N. T., the P. O. U. M.

After victory will come reconstruction. This period will, in several ways, be analogous to the months consequent to the great election victory of February 1936. The population will make demands. The people's claims will be more serious than after February 1936. The people will say: "We have fought—for what? We have fought—we must eat."

After the election victory of 1936 came workers' strikes, peasants' attempts to seize land, all of which the Popular Front government tried to placate with ornate proposals of land reform and with appeals to the "responsible elements" among the city workers to listen to reason, lest Fascism raise its ugly head. That was the time when the C. N. T. (the Anarcho-Syndicalist Labor Federation) started to recuperate from the wounds inflicted on it by the Primo de Rivera and the consequent Azaña repressions. Just as Primo de Rivera had shown toleration to the Social Democratic U. G. T. in the hope of squelching completely the banned C. N. T. as an influence among the workers of Spain, so Azaña, returned to governmental power by the masses of Spain, resorted to the Social-democratic trade unionists and the Stalinist politicals in order to safeguard the discontented population against incitement by the intransigent, "unreasonable" Spanish Anarchos. As the population grew more impatient and syndicalist-led strikes increased, the Stalinists, who had by then disbanded their trade-union organizations and entered the Social-Democratic U. G. T., began to organize a movement to stop the "irresponsible" strikes led by the syndicalists. Indeed a Republican assault Guard corps was established, recruited to some extent among the "United" Socialist Youth. The Assault Guard was to exercise its power of compulsion as much on the irresponsible syndicalists as on young Rivera's phalangists.

What was the attitude of the bourgeois Republicans and the Prieto "socialists" on the question of the future of Spain at that time?

"The Republic can survive on the condition it adopts a policy of social reform. The entire country wants work. If the govern-

ment makes an effort in that direction, it will receive the support of all the workers.

"Spain is economically backward. For example there are 86 railway companies for a network that hardly covers 17,300 kilometers. Another example: silica needed for the manufacture of glass is imported from France, when it could be very easily furnished by Spain.

"The present cultivation of abandoned or badly cultivated lands makes agrarian reform indispensable.

"The Republic will have to furnish twenty years of effort in order to succeed in raising the Spanish workers' condition of life to the European level.

"The bourgeois revolution has not ended. It can be given a social base through the development of the small peasantry."

Thus spoke a former Anarchist (Pestaña) but we all knew he expressed frankly the thoughts of the bourgeois Republicans and the Social-Democrats. This program was to be carried out through the intervention of the State. The Caballero faction, dominating the U. G. T., varnished this program with the terms "socialist" and "socialism." Its Araquistáins quoted Lenin, stressed more extensive government ownership with the aid of the Social-Democratic trade unions, and drafted plans for model State farms, saying all the while: "The masses had not voted left merely to have the same old bourgeois republic." Largo Caballero, a traditional reformist and trade union politician, was playing verbally at Bolshevism with his mind's eye on the premiership. The Prieto faction quoted Kautsky and warned against the peril of too much doctrinarism in time of crisis. But all in all, the programs of the "left" and "right" Social-Democrats and bourgeois republicans did not differ greatly. They all dreamt of accomplishing in Spain the miracles wrought by the Social-Democracy in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Indeed, in their inner circles, the following interesting theory made the rounds: "In case of a European war, neutrality will permit Spanish industry to revive and develop by having it furnish war material to the war combatants." You see, they had made a study of the clever Scandinavians.

What was the role and influence of the Communist factions?

In 1934, the C. P. S. changed, together with all the parties of the C. I., from "third period" revolutionism to a program of struggle to save democracy from the clutches of war and Nazi fascism. In 1936, after the February elections, the Communist Party of Spain was described as "much noise, much pro-U.S.S.R. propaganda, and very much money." It still had relatively few adherents. The Communist deputies in the Cortes had been elected with Social-Democratic and Republican Pop-Front votes. On the other hand, the C. P. S. was no longer the paper organization it became by 1931, with the various periodic expulsions, which, after 1925, reproduced in the component organizations of the C. I. the struggle within the ruling clique in the Soviet Union.

In 1931, the influence of the Spanish Trotskyites was at its zenith. While weaker numerically than the Catalan-Balearic Federation (leaning toward "Brandlerism"), then actually larger than the official party, the O. C. E. (Communist Opposition of Spain) included the finest and most respected elements of the Spanish Communist movement. Its banner was Trotsky, whose reputation as Lenin's partner in revolution had not, for several reasons, been successfully unmade by the special publicity campaign carried on after 1926 in all the parties of the C. I., as by Lovestone in the United States. Though they lamented the Soviet "Thermidor," the Spanish Trotskyites assured all who would listen—and in 1931 there were many intellectuals ready to listen—that a good man's place was in the



official party, a party to be reformed in accordance with the theses of the O. C. E. but still the Communist Party. At the behest of the "old man," the Spanish Trotskyites did fine work during the elections of 1931, helping to revive the rather ungrateful C. P. S., in opposition to the fast growing Socialist Party of Spain.

At the Seventh Congress of the C. I., the stork brought the Stalinist United Front as a blessed gift to the world labor movement. The Communist Party of Spain now had an important task to perform: to help bring to completion the Franco-Soviet Pact by safeguarding against a wide revolutionary outbreak, which might carry over into France, weaken France as a military power, and at any rate antagonize Great Britain, without whose good will the actual military features of the pact would never be executed. Representing a successful "proletarian revolution," a well financed "movement against war and fascism" and the idealized U.S.S.R., the Spanish section of the C. I. could be relied on to effect a salutary influence on the most energetic and young elements in the Spanish Social-Democracy. The C. P. S. and its auxiliary organizations were well worth the huge sums spent on it after 1934. Having changed over from the impatient revolutionarism of the "third period" to the deodorized attitude of sweetness and light befitting a guardian of democracy and civilization, it began to attract writers, teachers and artists. But its big job was neutralizing the discontent of the masses. To get near the masses, it started to carry out a well-laid plan of capturing the hugely grown S. P. S. and the U. G. T. by the process of infiltration and assimilation. The Social-Democrats were already warmed up for this by the fine work of the O. C. E. and the Spanish "Brandlerites". So that when the Trotskyites, at the new advice of their oracle wanted to enter the Socialist Party, the doors were already closed against them by the Stalinists, who had beaten them to it. The fusion of the O. C. E. and Maurin's "Bloque Obrero y Campesino" into the new P. O. U. M., presenting a program more akin to that of the Communist movement of 1918-1923 than to the official C. P. program of 1934, produced an organization that hardly reached beyond the limits of Catalonia.

As you know, Spanish anarcho-syndicalism is a sort of puzzle to all "marxists". (Marx would chortle in amusement at the boyish philosophic idealism of the self-styled "revolutionary marxists" whose comments you sent me the other day.) All good marxists-leninists repeat, as a lesson learned in their political ABC, that anarcho-syndicalism is a petty-bourgeois movement, that it does not flourish in the shadow of large industry. Spanish "marxist" writers, "revolutionary" and otherwise, do not fail to lay down this dictum periodically, though they see clearly that in reality the C. N. T. rests on the support of the industrial masses of advanced Catalonia while the C. P. S. and C. P. have both a predominantly petty-bourgeois base. It is reality that errs, for the ABC of Leninist Communist cannot be wrong. The fact is that anarcho-syndicalism has developed in Spain, to any great extent, only after 1914, that is with the increased industrialization due to the demands made by the world market on neutral Spain during the World War. The C. N. T. had 25,000 members in 1914; 500,000 in 1918; 1,000,000 in 1923, when it was run underground by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, which wanted to replace its influence with the more amenable Social-Democratic U. G. T.; and 1,500,000 in 1932, the year of the proclamation of the Republic. All Social-Democratic parties in Spain, the S. P. S., C. P. S., P. O. U. M., have had the occasion to state in exasperation that the C. N. T. was the greatest obstacle to their progress. And all, excepting the S. P. S., have courted it at one time or another in the hope of winning over its membership.

The C. N. T. had a program of action that is both utopian and practical. Utopian, considered from the angle of the relative backwardness of Spain as a whole, the real outlook of the population and the condition of the socialist consciousness of the population in the neighboring advanced countries. Practical because it has always rested on the immediate revindications of the working masses of Spain. Under the Primo government only the C. N. T. was the instrument expressing popular resistance, running, though legally banned, two general strikes that helped to make the military dictatorship untenable. Neither did the syndicalists desist when the Republic was proclaimed in 1931. The Republican-Social-Democrat government launched fierce repression against the C. N. T. The latter answered with the uprisings of December 1931 and January 1933, which netted the C. N. T. a wide loss of membership.

For it is in the typical "libertarian" insurrection—the occasion for them may return with victory over the militarist-reactionary rebels—that the C. N. T. mixture of the utopian and practical is best expressed. Who can object to the proclamation of direct worker control and "integral socialism" in this town or that town, or even in this or that province or country? We cannot object to this even though the conditions—local and general, economic and ideologic—making possible socialism are lacking. We are hemmed in by, and are a part of, the existing combination of circumstances, local and international. Surely, our revolutionary action will influence this combination of circumstances. The question we must always try to answer in such a situation is: "What will be the influence of our action, judged from the angle of the immediate or eventual abolition of capitalism?" Does it connote an advance toward that objective, or is it retrogressive, reactionary, considering its influence on the socialist consciousness of the population, which, you will not deny, plays an important part in the making of a socialist revolution.

In October 1934, the C. N. T. was illegal in Catalonia. The first rebellious act of the revolting "Left" Catalan government was to close down the syndicalist halls which began to reopen with the news of the revolt. In Asturias, the C. N. T. was in the forefront of the fight.

In February 1936, the syndicalists voted for the Popular Front candidates because they wanted to liberate the thousands of their imprisoned comrades, many of whom nevertheless remained in the jails long after the government changed hands. In the post-election period the C. N. T. extended greatly its influence. It grew as the instrument of protest against the unabated misery of the propertyless of Spain. The C. N. T. owed no allegiance to the rites and codexed ideology of an embalmed previous revolution. It was not duty-bound to save the Soviet Union, to help safeguard and perfect the Franco-Soviet pact. It placed no faith in the New Deal plans of Liberal and Social-Democratic officials. It called for the immediate amelioration of the poor people of Spain and for worker control. It inspired and directed many strikes in its urge to get these things, though all good people said: "Peace! You are playing into the hands of reaction." According to the syndicalists, fascist reaction could be squelched by taking frank measures against the fascists. The Republicans, Social-Democrats, Communists, directed their fury and talents against the uncompromising C. N. T. It was the Stalinists, master-fabricators of lies, who concocted the legend that fascists working within the C. N. T. were responsible for the syndicalists' intransigence.

Then came the reactionary-military revolt. The population of the principal Spanish cities reacted with a will and with courage that almost upset the hold that the good men with international duties and Scandinavian plans had on the country.



## Toward Socialist Clarity

*In answer to criticism in January issue of "Socialist Appeal," Chicago*

A REVOLUTIONARY is not merely a person who uses the words "revolution" and revolutionary" as often as he can. A social revolutionary is a person who acts for a fundamental change of the existing social-economic system. Neither does one become a marxist by denominating himself as such. Marx's apocryphal: "I am not a marxist" is to the point.

Marxian socialism is not philosophic idealism, answering the needs of the heart and mind. Marxian socialism analyzes social circumstances, historic events, deduces from them the motives of human activity and the laws of historic change so that it may guide thereby its revolutionary action. The attitude of marxian socialists does not base itself on wishes, on generous impulses, but on the study of the circumstance on hand. In that sense the marxist is an opportunist.

It is presumptuous to scold history for not behaving according to your rules, especially if these rules were made by a man who did not quite believe in them himself. (I am referring to Zinoviev, without wishing to depreciate his character, courage and genius. Very few young "revolutionary marxists" suspect that the rationalization of the events of the Russian October into a system of Leninist "tactics and strategy" is the artificial work of the late Zinoviev, who was enough of a real marxist in private life to say that the Russian Revolution was not a trained seal that balanced the ball on its nose at the whip of the Bolshevik strategists.) The C. N. T. and F. A. I., influenced by a good number of hard-headed and materialist members, may be acting "marxistically" though they never mention Marx. (Of course, I do not presume to speak for either organization.)

It is grand to expect the population of Catalonia to "defy the whole capitalist world and struggle to extend the revolution to all other countries." But are you sure that the population of Catalonia, the workers and peasants of Catalonia, want to defy the whole capitalist world and "extend the revolution to all other countries?" The workers support the C. N. T. in Catalonia because that organization expresses their immediate needs as they understand them. They are not supporting, or are supporting the P. O. U. M. and the Stalinists for similar reasons.

In his speech at the Gran Price hall in Barcelona on December 10, Niñ said, in the face of the opposition and intrigue of the Catalanian republicans and Stalinists of the Generalita: "The duties of government do not interest us at all in time of peace. But today the government of the Generalita signifies the union to struggle against fascism. That is why we are a part of it. To break now this unity of action would be a crime against the Revolution and against the war on fascism." Niñ, unlike our critic, must have not considered only his own desire but also how the great majority of the population felt about it. He must have considered the circumstances on hand.

"Only they who have no faith at all in the revolutionary spirit of the workers can imagine for one moment that the Madrid proletarians would tolerate a government that would sabotage the revolution in Barcelona." Indeed, not only do the workers of Madrid, but even the workers of Barcelona, tolerate such sabotage. Not only do the Madrid workers tolerate the "sabotage of the revolution in Barcelona" but they tolerate the suppression of the "revolutionists" in Madrid.

I think that mere repetition will bring out the rather nice

philosophical idealism of the remainder of the "revolutionary marxist's" argument:

"And would the French proletariat remain quiet if the Catalanian workers would appeal for help directly to them and urge them to overthrow the Blum Government if such help were prevented? A bold revolutionary policy on the part of the Catalanian proletarian organizations would mean that Blum and Stalin would be compelled to act or suffer the consequences. And would Mussolini and Hitler attack a Catalanian Workers' Republic? Undoubtedly! But then the only way, following the reformists, to prevent such an attack, is to consent to remain under capitalist slavery."

It would be unfair to brand our critic as a reformist because he fails to make a revolution, setting up his regulation soviets, in Chicago, just because he does not believe that either the workers of Chicago or the workers of New York will swing along with him in this little operation. He may be called a reformist for more comprehensible reasons.

## ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF NAZISM • Fried

*From "Marxistische Tribuene," Paris, France*

*We offer the following outline as a concise and sober evaluation of the present economic situation of Nazi Germany. Recalling that already in 1918, the good word was that capitalism was moribund and about to break down beyond repair, we wonder if the author's conception of the decline of capitalism needs at least specifying. The subject of the economic perspective of Germany naturally leads to the following questions:*

1. *Can the Nazi regime endure if it does not resort to war? 2. Can Nazi Germany fight a victorious war? Both questions are tied up with the general problem of the working class and war, or say, the socialist movement and war. These topics will be dealt with by Frederic Huehle in the March issue of the International Review.*

1. The decline of world capitalism continues. The present juncture is not that of rising but of declining capitalism. This decline no longer affects single sectors of capitalist production. The internal market has shrunk, while world trade is in a condition of stagnation. The wide unemployment that belongs to the crisis phase persists with the acceleration of the rationalization process.

The rise of the productivity of labor during the last ten years has been from two to three times as great as before the war. The agricultural crisis has not been fully liquidated. The increase of internal production is accounted for especially by the present hurried armament.

2. The fascist capitalism of Germany cannot escape the general tendencies to decline. Economically it is one of the weakest centers of advanced capitalism. Its concentration is strongly developed, its capital funds trifling, its middle strata are for the most part pauperized, and up to now its possibilities of expansion have been small. All of this makes for increased economic tension and the sharpening of the typical capitalist dangers, which National Socialism attempts to overcome by means of these two methods:



a. Through the destruction of all organizations of its mortal enemy, the German working class, and by breaking up and diverting the tendency of the German workers to resist.

b. Through the expansion and strengthening of the state-owned sectors, in order to increase as much as possible the elastic reserves of capitalist production.

3. In general, world capitalism shows a tendency to State intervention in economy to the extent that it suffers from the convulsions of the crisis.

4. The National Socialist State has increased its intervention especially in the spheres of foreign trade, agriculture and the armament industry.

5. The German economic juncture is for the most part that of increased armament. Production in the consumption goods industries remains far behind production in the capital goods industries. Thus the exploitation of labor is augmented.

6. We can distinguish two stages in the present German rearmament. The rearmament "miracle" of the first years of National Socialism was made possible by the fact that the Nazi State found, as its share of the world economic crisis, a production apparatus that was 50% unused, with 8 to 9 million unemployed.

7. Technically, without stressing here the special conditions of capitalist production, it was not difficult to organize a gigantic armament production without restricting any more the production of consumption goods.

8. Carrying out its hurried rearmament, German fascist capitalism had to overcome two difficulties.

a. The lack and importation of necessary raw material.

b. The financing of the armament industry.

9. This armament "juncture" has now entered a new stage. Heavy investments were necessary for the amortization of the manufacturing plans, which ran into very high figures, for the replacement of worn out machinery, for the creation of new capital funds required to replace certain raw materials (as oil through the liquifaction of coal, buna, etc.). The increased German armament production was followed by a fall of production in the consumption goods industries.

10. From this flows the now obvious failure of the so-called German "native products" campaign. According to the general press, the dependence of Nazi Germany on imports from abroad is as great as that of pre-war Germany. Today, as in 1913, a fifth of the means of living, including fodder, must be imported.

With the growing scarcity of means of living, it is possible to provide raw material to the war industries till the outbreak of the war, though under great difficulties.

11. The difficulties of financing German rearmament:

a. Under National Socialism the Reich budget is no longer made public. That is, only the State's revenue is announced, but not its expenditures. There is no doubt that the increase of receipts through higher taxes, by slicing aid to the unemployed, covers only a fraction of the increased expenditures for armament. Neither do the partly compulsory loans or the plunder of the social security funds bring enough. To cover the cost of rearmament there have been contracted obligations, most of them in the form of short term notes, that run into billions. The scheme is untenable if continued for a long time; immediately, it is not dangerous. Mussolini's Abyssinian war cost Italy nearly one year's budget. Taxes were not raised and the regular revenue of the Italian State did not grow during that time. The problem of covering the costs of the Abyssinian war has not been solved to date. In spite of that there has been no economic convulsion in Italy up to now.

It may be worth while to compare the financial situation of contemporary Germany, a situation that is obviously difficult, with that of the country during the last war. What are the decisive differences?

In the World War more than 13 million Germans were under arms. In an economic sense, they were rentiers. They were nourished with the substance of the national economy. Today, on the contrary, there are fewer than a million in arms.

The World War brought a great diminution of German production. The stocks of machinery could hardly be renewed; the railways suffered the same way. The economic base of the national industries was gradually being sucked out by the war. The body of German production lost a considerable percentage of its value. At the same time a debt of more than 100 billion marks was contracted in war loans. Today the destruction of the production substance is smaller than during the war period, though it is quite considerable (destruction of the German labor forces as a result of combining greater rationalization with the simultaneously augmented wage robbery; destruction of the labor forces through the undermining of the sick and old age security funds; destruction of the German means of production through the hurried depletion of the forests, etc.)

In view of the systematic falsification practiced by the Nazis, it is impossible to give exact data on the present debt burden of Germany. But today's indebtedness is only a fraction compared to the debt burden borne by the country during the World War. The creditors of German capitalism inside the country have for the most part been expropriated through inflation; the internal indebtedness is not significant, compared to other States, as France, Italy.

It is possible to hold up the mark for a longer period. Its value naturally stands up only in certain sectors of the foreign field. Internally the price level is about 40% above that of the Anglo-Saxon countries; through only a 40% depreciation no export advantage can be organized. The foreign trade standing of the mark is not the decisive point in further financial development.

There is the possibility of devaluation carried out at one stroke. This is naturally fraught with danger, in view of past experience with inflation, in view of the Nazi promises and in view of the fact that with a further deficit in the State's economy there comes the threat of new depreciation. But devaluation does not necessarily offer a peril that the Nazi regime could not survive.

In any case, there is the ominous fact of growing uncovered indebtedness; though now, before the outbreak of the war, it has not as yet reached a threatening degree.

12. Further economic convulsions will bring the strengthening of the statized sector of industry at the sacrifice of certain capitalist layers (for example, house owners, as tried by Mussolini. Also the statization of the armament industry, which was opposed up to now with arguments:

a. About the necessary extent of statization.

b. About the possibility of supplying, through private industry, other branches of production, as in other countries, and thus creating a reserve of productive capacity.

13. In case of war, the economic situation of the country will be much more shaky than it was in 1914.

a. In 1914 Germany was a creditor country; its foreign holdings were valued at 20-30 billion gold marks. Today it is a debtor country, with its debts exceeding by far its own foreign loans.



b. In 1914, balances of billions of gold lay in the Reichs bank and in private hands. The gold and exchange reserves held in the country today are minimal.

c. In 1914, the country had large stocks of food stuffs and other means of living, so that the depreciation of the mark only showed itself appreciably in 1916. Today, before the war, the country's stocks of necessities are depleted.

d. In 1914, the country possessed great industrial reserves of every sort. Today, before the start of the war, a large part of the raw material is already claimed by industry.

The lack of economic reserves will oblige the National Socialist regime during the coming war:

a. To do its utmost to gain an early victory, thus avoiding internal economic tension.

b. To choose allies that are in the position to make up its economic deficiencies.

14. General perspective. It is not impossible, but rather improbable, that the economic tension in Germany will increase enough in the near future to bring forth revolutionary action against the Nazi regime. (It is evident that the general rise of the total world capitalism will also aid German capitalism.)

Conclusion. We must do everything we can to stop the destruction of the present small illegal cadres, so that they might survive to serve in possible large and decisive political action in the future. For this we must have a change in the manner of our activity. We must lessen, as much as possible, the danger zone of our activity.

15. In the near future, the German working class will hardly be in the position to depend, to any greater degree than now, on any allies in its fight against the Nazi regime. The middle layers of Germany are not as strong as they are in France. The city middle strata do not constitute a fighting force today. It is true that the peasantry is already criticizing certain National Socialist measures, but it does not take a clear stand against them. It is partly benefitted economically by the Nazis; to some extent it suffers from the recent Nazi acts. It is benefitted by the rise of agricultural prices, which definitely increased the peasants' income. It is repelled by the latest agrarian legislation, which diminished the possibilities of credit, through bureaucratic control measures. The German peasantry is not as yet an important anti-fascist force.

Translated by A. Tower

## books

*LA REVOLUTION TRAHIE (The Revolution Betrayed).*

By Leon Trotsky. Bernard Grasset, Paris.

CRITICISED BY EDGAR L. ROOF

THE manuscript of this book was sent to the publishers when the first "Moscow Trial" was announced. Therefore Trotsky in his foreword takes the opportunity to state that the book explains the trial in advance, showing "the mysticism of the affair to be a mystification." This may be true in the following sense. In the August and consequent Moscow Trials not only the old Bolsheviks but their wardship of the Russian Revolution were being tried. Not only Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek and Trotsky were on trial but also the socialist pretensions of the Bolshevism of 1918. Bolshevism sat in judgement over itself and found itself guilty of treason even to its socialist pretensions. Trotsky's book is an able piece of defence. It is also

his apology for the sorry appearance of the Bolshevik sort of socialism—state organized capitalism, directed from above by a self-appointed officialdom, which, excepting for his rediscovery of the pleasant sides of democracy, is after all, also Trotsky's socialism.

### Chapter I: Attainments

"The history of the last few decades attest . . . that in the conditions of decadent capitalism, backward countries cannot reach the level of the old centers of capitalism." "Concentrating at the same time the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the State, the revolution permits the application of new methods of an infinitely greater efficacy." "The socialization of the means of production becomes the first necessary condition for drawing the backward country from barbarism."

These ideas are not new. The reader may, at the first glance be misled by the word "socialization". This is the typical Social-Democratic conception of socialized production as government ownership, as a bureaucratically conducted State economy. The idea of the progressive (bourgeois) revolution has been presented in detail in Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*. In his letter to his Russian correspondent, Engels pointed out that Russia could only develop large industry as a hot-house growth, that is, under State protection. When we compare the huge Russia and small Turkey, we say that the question of protection is one of degree only, not of principle. A backward country must resort to State ownership and control of industry, in one degree or another, to safeguard its independence. The story of the late Tsarism illustrates this point. Later in the book Trotsky suggests that the abolition of the Russian state ownership would push the country down to the level of a semi-colonial country, which may be partly true.

However, the total State ownership found in Russia today did not come into being in accordance with the Bolshevik program of 1918. The economic program of pre-war Bolshevism, applied through the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants," called for a national syndicate of industrialists (the Corporate State!) under government supervision. The five "revolutionary-democratic" proposals of 1918—were nationalization of the banks, government regulation or nationalization of the biggest capitalist monopolies (sugar, oil, coal and metal), obligatory syndicalization of all industrial concerns, obligatory membership of the population in consumers' cooperatives, dissolution of merchant combines. The program took a positive stand against the abolition of private property and even promised easier credits for the smaller capitalists. The turmoil of the revolution did not make things seem too attractive to the private capitalist. The Civil War completed the disorganization of the productive process in the country, making an attempt at economic enterprise by the State imperative. The need was too great, too immediate, for scattered private intervention. The total State ownership we now see in Soviet Russia began as the product of the economic cataclysm that overwhelmed the country in the Civil War. It was given further impulsion, by the threat of the commodity-starved peasantry to overthrow the State party in 1928; secondly, by the grown personal needs and ambitions of the ruling set, and the danger of foreign aggression.

There is a State regulated industrial boom in Russia. It is carried on with a terrific waste of energy and at great human sacrifices. Private—State regulated—capitalism may have done the job faster and less painfully.

Trotsky tells us that the yield of Russian production per each inhabitant is still very low, and he says there is a "privileged directing social layer" which appropriates the lion's share in



means of consumption, though there are no "possessing classes." Since the rate of productivity is low, the "privileged, directing social layer" finds itself on a lower level than the eaters of surplus-value in private capitalism. But what is our bourgeoisie if not the "privileged, directing layer" of our society?

In the March issue Mr. Roof will criticize the following chapters of Trotsky's book:

- II. *Economic Development and the Zigzags*
- III. *Socialism and the State*
- IV. *The Struggle for Increased Productivity*
- V. *The Soviet Thermidor*

#### ENGELS-KAUTSKY CORRESPONDENCE

Orbis-Verlag, Prague, 416 pp.

REVIEWED BY PAUL MATTICK

**K**AUTSKY'S relations with Engels began in 1881. In explanation, Kautsky precedes the collection of letters with a short sketch of his own development, showing the great influence exercised by Engels in the making of Kautsky. The correspondence itself cannot contribute much to this. It contains little of theoretic matter. It sheds more light on the history of the Social-Democratic Party. Kautsky refers to Marx and Engels, in the typical social-democratic and philistine manner, as of the "great masters," the "Olympian," the "Thunder God", etc., whose successor he was to become. Soon after their first meeting, he found himself alone with Engels. Soon he drank beer with the Master. Kautsky was extremely honored "that Marx did not receive him in the same cold way with which Goethe received his young colleague Heine." The apprentice honors the master, for he sees in himself the future master.

Engels' remarks on the political questions of his time, as presented in these letters, are quite often in gross contradiction with later factual development; they will, nevertheless, be used as political kindling wood. His ideas on the question of nationalist independence movement, for example, do not lag far behind the Leninist nationalist policy, and are no more tenable in our time. What can be today—or what could have been in Engels' own time—the meaning of the following: "It is historically impossible today for a great people to discuss earnestly its internal problems as long as it lacks national independence . . . The Irish and Poles are most internationalist when they are nationalist." (2:7:82). If it is true that this nationalism contributed to the general development of contemporary society, it is also true that it has constituted and constitutes a reactionary element. This double significance of the nationalist movement finds itself excluded in Engels' single-sided judgement.

From 1883 on, writes Kautsky, Engels regarded him and Bernstein as "the trustworthy representatives of Marxian theory," and thus Kautsky adopted as his life work "the continuation of the scientific results of Marx's investigation and thought." At first, he was somewhat critical of the current "party stupidity," and in a letter to Engels (5:29:84) described the party situation as follows:

"It is quite characteristic that nearly all the intellectuals in the party . . . cry for colonies, for national thought, for a resurrection of the Teutonic antiquity, for confidence in the government, for having the power of 'justice' replace the class struggle, and they express a decided aversion for the materialist interpretation of history—Marxian dogma, they call it . . . Most of them are distinguished for their learned obscurity." Such human material could not naturally have been guilty of "treachery" in 1914-1918. It merely remained true to itself. And it absorbed its former critic. The historic ground for this early degeneration was, as

Engels wrote to Kautsky (11:8:84), that "the development of capitalism proved itself to be stronger than the revolutionary counter-pressure. A new upsurge against capitalist production needed a violent shock, as the loss by England of its domination of the world market, a sudden revolutionary opportunity in France." In the meantime, the reformists raced among themselves, and Engels remained far behind the other *real-politiker*. In spite of all his privileges as a master, he permits himself to complain about the publication of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (2:23:91): "It is in fact a brilliant thought to have German socialist science present, after its emancipation from the Bismarckian Socialist laws, its own Socialist laws, formulated by the officials of the Social-Democratic Party."

Many letters written by Engels to Kautsky on the questions of the day point to strong reformist tendencies in Engels himself. His interest in preserving and strengthening the party organization brought him at times to counsel caution, as shown by his opinion of the general strike. It may be considered unfair to evaluate Engels on the basis of such chance remarks, it is, however, important to emphasize that Engels rejoiced over Kautsky's work in the measure that he developed "the democratic method of the proletarian struggle in the democratic countries, in opposition to the policy of violence. I (Kautsky) stood then for the same policy that I defend also today (page 366)."

## HOW MOSCOW CONFESSES • Ciliga

(Continued from page 20)

"You are a worker. We don't want to shoot you down like any white guard. As a good worker you ought to confess."

The sailor did not confess. But he became half-crazy. They let him alone after that. The most important detail in this affair is, perhaps, the fact that it did not take place after the Kirov assassination, in 1934, but a long time before, in 1930. In the sailor's story there is another circumstance to which I did not attach any importance at that time but which today, after the recent trials, bears a symptomatic significance. The G.P.U. tried, without success, to tear from the sailor the false confession that he belonged to the Trotskyite opposition. In reality, he happened to be a non-political worker. Employed on Soviet steamers going abroad, he was guilty of an act of contraband, the only crime he could justly have been accused of.

When an accused is called out of his cell, he is never told where he is taken. The G.P.U. thus utilize an effective means of terrorizing its subjects. Sometimes they make believe that the accused is being taken directly to the place of execution. The accused is brought out of the cell. As he passes through the underground corridors, the guards, chatting among themselves suggest to him that his end is near.

At the beginning of 1931 there took place in Moscow the trial against the Mensheviks. Its purpose was to demonstrate to the workers of Russia that the social-democrats as well as the non-party intellectuals were at the head of the criminal betrayal of the country. A number of celebrated ex-Mensheviks and one member of the Menshevik party confessed at the trial that they had accepted a program of sabotage and military intervention against the U.S.S.R. They declared that this program was not only the program of the Russian Mensheviks but also that of the other parties in the Second International. The absurdity was obvious. But it was under the sign of this absurdity that the trial unrolled. If in the engineer's trials most of the accusations were lies, in the Menshevik trial, the accusations and self-accusations



were 100% false. From this point of view, the Menshevik trial reveals itself as a grand rehearsal for the future trials of Zinoviev and the other Bolsheviks.

Before touching on what I heard about the affair of 1931 from some of the immediate participants, I want to quote several lines from an article by Blum that appeared in the *Populaire* of March 17, 1931:

"The Moscow accused have confessed crimes imputed to them but which they have not committed. They have formally recognized as true, acts whose material falseness is beyond doubt." After showing that this method amounts to the introduction of inquisitorial justice, Blum concluded: "The value of the confessions turns on itself. They do not prove and they cannot prove acts that are untrue. They prove, however, that to moral perversion, to Stalinist terror, there has been added a sort of mental decomposition." This is as true for the trials of 1936 as it was true for the trial of 1931.

The accused in the Menshevik trial were not shot but received varied prison terms. They were taken to the central prison for political criminals located at Verkhne-Ouralsk. At that time the establishment held 150 oppositionist Communists, among whom were my Yugoslav comrades and I, and more than 50 socialists and anarchists. The new prisoners were distributed in the prison in such a manner that they could not communicate with the old prisoners or among themselves. Obviously the G.P.U. was afraid of something. But in spite of that, we found ways of making contact with them. In a letter, I put to them this question: "How could you have made such monstrous confessions?" They answered: "We cannot understand ourselves how such a nightmare could have taken place." Victor Serge has brought back from Russia more complete information about the Menshevik group. Permit me to repeat here one of his observations: "One of the principal accused, the famous historian and publicist Soukhanov, spread in the isolator a copy of the protest he wrote to the Soviet government. In this protest he demanded that the Soviet government carry out the promise it had made to free him after his false confession."

The political trials of 1929-1931 were staged by the Stalinist government because a grave economic crisis shook the country at that time as a result of the difficulties of the first Five Year Plan.

What is the purpose of the 1936 trials? What crisis threatens the country today? There is a crisis issuing from the social and economic results of the Five Year Plan. The working masses feel that they have been fooled by the Five Year Plans, that they have been fooled by the revolution. The masses have strained all their force. They have made sacrifices. The fruits of their efforts and sacrifices are now being appropriated—the masses are starting to realize this—by others: by the functionaries, by the various "bosses". In order to deaden the understanding of the masses, in order to stifle their discontent, new trials are needed.

*Translated by E. Mercier*

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## THEORY OF "TWO TRUTHS"

WHO IS Ciliga? He is a former member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the former editor of that party's central organ, the former foreign representative of the party's central committee. Ciliga spent nine years in the Soviet Union. He spent six years of the nine in prisons and concentration camps. He was freed and allowed to leave the land of Lenin's "socialism" (first phase of communism) after two hunger strikes, lasting forty-one hours. "I succeeded in escaping from Russia after two and one-half years of desperate struggle, finding myself constantly between life and death. I succeeded because I obtained a passport permitting me to leave the country, because I had abroad a family which could do something and because I boldly put to my torturers the alternatives: 'Let me leave or I shall kill myself.' But my comrades remain in Siberian deportation and in Soviet dungeons. Only the active aid of the European proletariat and of the democratic movement can free them."

Ciliga is probably too sanguine about the European proletariat and the democratic movement. Ciliga may be recognized as a lucky man. He escaped Lenin's "socialism" (the first phase of communism) before the Soviet "socialist" police (police typical of the first phase of communism) changed completely its formerly diffident treatment of foreign Communists to its present truculence. Trotsky would explain (see page 115 of his *Revolution trahie*) that this change of treatment was possibly not a decision of principle "but one of the episodic necessity of defence." We shall see the results of this change in the new Moscow Trials being gotten ready at this moment. Ciliga was the very last of the lucky fellows. At the present time, foreign Communists are no longer dumped out of the land of Lenin's "socialism" (first phase of communism) to suffer the awful conditions of bourgeois democracy, but are, instead, put on the ice, so to say, for use in future Moscow Trials. Considering the identity of the last foreign Communists to be apprehended by the Soviet secret police, we may say that not even the most loyal and best-behaved of Stalin's servitors among the non-Russian comrades are secure against the eventuality of being called on from up high to perform for the Khosain (the boss, the master of the Soviet "trust of trusts") the trifling service of confessing to a platonic assassination, to sabotage and other dirty jobs for Hitler, Trotsky and the Mikado.

In this article, Ciliga, a first-hand observer of the arts and science of the G.P.U., offers an important contribution to the documentation and analysis of that curious phenomenon of abnormal psychology that now goes under the name of Moscow Confessions. (No Moscow Trial can be called complete without a Moscow Confession). The degenerate West is now amusing itself with the most serious features of Lenin's "socialism," (the first phase of communism). It appears that outside of Russia a new Saturday-night game has invaded the drawing rooms. It is somewhat like Post Office, Musical Chairs and the Mock Trial, and is called Moscow Confessions. That in itself goes to prove that the bourgeoisie is on its last legs!

The theory of the "two truths" is not new. It has always belonged to Bolshevism. It is an essential part of the program and outlook of Leninism. It is an essential part of the program and outlook of all totalitarian political systems. Trotsky himself, now cooing sweetish verses to the principles of democracy and the rule and political participation of the rank and file, subscribes to the theory of the "two truths"—one for the mass, one



for the inner set. What he has to say in private about the class nature of the Soviet State, about the social-economic character of the U.S.S.R., about the State-capitalist exploitation of the Russian worker, is so different from the evasive quibble that he finds convenient to weather in his published writings.

Marcel Martinet, a French writer and thinker, who is actually a worker, has dared to put his finger on the cancerous spot. He writes in his *Culture prolétarienne* (Proletarian Culture):

"A system of political propaganda that, without appeal to experience, without appeal to critical control, without appeal to the opinion and initiative of those concerned, recites, and makes people recite, a summary and rigid catechism of dogma, the articles of which change from time to time, as in the game of bonneteau, in accordance with the opportunist expedience of a

policy formulated in the dark of a general staff and imposed on the proletariat from above by individuals who style themselves as its chiefs—such a system of political propaganda, as excellent as may be the ultimate intentions of the new masters who impose it, is a betrayal of the human being as such. It is a direct betrayal of the proletariat. For it lowers man. It brings into contempt and destroys that which, in the human animal, is man and—the entire justification of our revolutionary demand. It betrays the proletariat in battle by foisting on it weapons made of cardboard. It betrays the proletariat in its very being. For when those people treat the working class as an instrument that may be manipulated at will, they prove their contempt for the very mass they speak of saving—without expecting it to have anything to say about the manner in which it is to be saved."

# STATE AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

• Martov

*From Martov's lines, painstakingly penned, meticulously reasoned, history laughs. His work is dedicated to the increase and development of the socialist consciousness of the workers of the world. As such, its importance will rise with the growth of clarity in the international labor movement. At this moment, Martov's political essays take on particular importance because they reveal the groundwork, the supporting piles, of the stage on which the bloody Moscow Trials are being enacted. From Martov's lines, completed early in 1919, history laughs.*

*The next installment, appearing in the March issue of the International Review, will include the chapters: "Dictatorship over the Proletariat?" and "Metaphysical Materialism vs. Dialectical Materialism." This is the first English translation of Martov's essays on the State and Revolution.*

## *The Mysticism of the Soviet Regime*

THE revolutionary movement that is tinged with Bolshevism recognizes soviets as the form of political organization (even the sole form) by which the emancipation of the proletariat can be realized.

For this viewpoint, the Soviet State structure—said to be a phase in the progressive suppression of the State itself in its role as an apparatus of social oppression—is the historical motivated product of a long evolution, arising in the midst of class antagonisms when these have reached great acuteness in imperialism. It is described as the best embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Appearing at a time when bourgeois democracy has lost all content, the soviet regime is pictured as the perfect expression of real democracy.

However, every perfection has this dangerous feature. People untroubled by critical reasoning, people blind to the nuances of "idle" theory, are impatient to possess themselves of the perfection, without bothering to take notice that the perfection in question is supposed to be based on particular historic conditions. Metaphysical reasoning refuses to accept the dialectic negation of the absolute. It ignores the relative. Having learned that the true, the genuine, the perfect mode of social life has at last been discovered, it insists on having this perfect mode applied to daily existence.

We therefore see that, contrary to its own theoretic claims, this perfect political form has become applicable to all peoples,

to all social groups. All that is necessary is that the people concerned want to modify the structure of the State under which it is suffering. Soviets have become the slogan for the proletariat of the most advanced industrial countries, the United States, England, Germany. They are also the slogan for agricultural Hungary, peasant Bulgaria and Russia, where agriculture is just issuing from primitive structures.

The universal efficacy of the soviet regime reaches even farther. Communist publicists seriously speak of soviet revolutions occurring, or about to occur, in Asiatic Turkey, among the Egyptian fellahs, in the pampas of South America. In Corea, the proclamation of a soviet republic is only a matter of time. In India, China and Persia the soviet idea is advancing with the speed of an express train. And who dares to doubt that by now the soviet system has already been adapted to the primitive social conditions of the Bashkirs, Kirghizes, Turkomans and the mountaineers of Daghestan.

No matter what marxist thought may have to say on the subject, the soviet regime, as such, not only solves the antagonism arising between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the conditions of highly developed capitalism, but is the universal State form that cuts through the difficulties and antagonisms arising at any degree of social evolution. Theoretically the lucky people bursting into soviets are expected to have passed—at least ideologically—the stage of bourgeois democracy. They are expected to have freed themselves from a number of noxious illusions—parliamentarism, the need for a universal, direct, equal and secret ballot, the need of liberty of press, etc. Only then can they rise to know the supreme perfection incorporated in the soviet State structure. In practice, however, nations here and there, possessed by the metaphysical negations of the progression traced by soviet theory, jump over the prescribed stages. Soviets are the perfect form of the State. They are the magic wand by which all inequalities and all misery may be suppressed. Learning of soviets who would consent to suffer the yoke of less perfect systems of government? Having once tasted of the sweet, who would continue to live in bitterness?

In February 1918, at Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky and Kamenev still defended with much obstinance the right of peoples to self-determination. They demanded from victorious Germany that this principle be applied, through the instrumentality of the equal



and universal ballot, in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. The historic value of democracy was still recognized at that time. But a year later, at the congress of the Russian Communist Party, the intrepid Bukharine already insisted that the principle of self-determination of peoples had to be replaced with the principle of self-determination of the laboring classes. Lenin succeeded in obtaining the maintenance of the principle of self-determination—for backward peoples, paralleling in this respect certain philosophers who, not wanting to fall out with the Church, used to limit the scope of their materialist teachings to animals deprived of the benefits of divine revelation. But it was not for doctrinal reasons that the Communist congress refused to fall in line with Bukharine. Lenin won out with arguments of a diplomatic order. It was said to be unwise to alienate from the Communist International the Hindoos, Persians and other peoples who, though still blind to the revelations, were in a situation of pan-national struggle against the foreign oppressor. Fundamentally, the Communists were in full agreement with Bukharine. Having tasted of sweetness, who would offer bitterness to his neighbor?

So that when the Turkish consul at Odessa permitted himself to launch the famous hoax about the triumph of a soviet revolution in the Ottoman empire, not a single Russian newspaper refused to take the obvious hoax seriously. Not a single publication showed the slightest skepticism concerning the ability of the good Turks to jump over the stages of self-determination, universal franchise, bourgeois parliamentarism, etc. The mystification was quite successful. Mystifications find a favorable soil in mysticism. For no less than mystic is the concept of a political form, which by virtue of its particular makeup, can surmount all economic, social and national contradictions.

In the course of the Congress of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany at Leipzig, good men racked their brains to discover how to conciliate "all power to the soviets" with the traditional notions of the social-democracy concerning the political forms of the socialist revolutions, with the notion of democracy.

For here is a mystery that escapes the understanding of the true-believers of Sovietism with the same persistence that the mystery of the immaculate conception has ever escaped the understanding of the Christian faithful. It escapes sometimes the understanding of its own creator.

We have the amusing example of the reception of the news that the soviet idea had triumphed in Hungary. It seemed, at first, that everything was performed according to the rites. But one essential detail was missing. It was reported that the Hungarian "soviet" did not come into being as a result of a fratricidal war of the Hungarian proletariat (we shall see later how important is this detail). It was, on the contrary, the product of the unity of the Hungarian proletariat. Lenin was troubled. In a telegram, the complete text of which appeared in the foreign press, he asked Bela Kun:

"What guarantees have you that your revolution is really a Communist revolution, that it is not simply a socialist revolution, not a revolution by the social-traitors?"

Bela Kun's reply, published in the Russian press, betrayed some confusion and a lack of preciseness. The Hungarian revolutionary power, it appeared, rested in the hands of a group of five persons, two of whom were Communists, two social-democrats and a fifth "in the same category as your Lunacharsky." The mystery had grown thicker.

As a result of the extreme class antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the proletariat overthrows the most complete embodiment of democratic statism. By this act, the proletariat creates itself a new political mode, which is also the

specific expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here is the starting point of the "soviet idea."

The political mode thus created is universally applicable. It fits the needs and consequences of all kinds of social change. It can clothe the multiform substance of all the revolutionary acts of the twentieth century. Here is the "soviet idea" at the close of its own evolution.

This dialectical contradiction summarizes the mystery of "sovietism", which is a mystery beyond the dogmatic comprehension of thinkers on the left and on the right.

#### *Dictatorship of the Minority*

The mechanism of the popular revolutions of the past historic period had these characteristics.

The role of active factor in the overturn belonged to *minorities* of the social classes in whose interest the revolution developed. These minorities exploited the confused discontent and the sporadic explosions of anger arising among scattered and socially inconsistent elements within the revolutionary class. They guided the class minorities to destroy the old social forms. In certain cases, the active leading minorities had to use the power of their concentrated energy in order to shatter the inertia of the elements they tried to wield for revolutionary purposes. Therefore, these active leading minorities sometimes made efforts—often successful efforts—to repress the passive resistance of the manipulated elements when the latter refused to move forward toward the broadening and deepening of the revolution. The dictatorship of an active revolutionary minority, a dictatorship that tended to be terrorist, was the normal coming-to-a-head of the situation in which the old social order had confined the popular masses that were now called on by the revolutionary to forge their own destiny.

There where the active revolutionary minority was not able to organize such a dictatorship, or to maintain it for some time—as was the case in Germany, Austria, France in 1848—we observe the miscarriage of the revolutionary process, the collapse of the revolution.

Engels said that the revolutions of the past historic period were the work of conscious minorities exploiting the spontaneous revolt of unconscious majorities.

It is understood that the word "conscious" should be taken here in a relative sense. It was a question of pursuing political and social aims that were quite definite, though at the same time quite contradictory and utopian. The ideology of the Jacobins of 1793-1794 was thoroughly utopian. It cannot be considered to have been the product of an objective conception of the process of historic evolution. But in relation to the mass of peasants, small producers and workers in whose name they demolished the old regime, the Jacobins represented a conscious vanguard whose destructive work was subordinated to positive problems.

In the last decade of the 19th century, Engels arrived at the conclusion that the epoch of revolutions that are effected by conscious minorities heading unknowing masses had closed for ever. From then on, he said, revolution would be prepared by long years of political propaganda, organization, education, and will be realized directly and consciously by the interested masses themselves.

This idea has become the idea of the great majority of modern socialists to such a degree that the slogan: "All power to the soviets!" was originally launched as an answer to the need of assuring, during the revolutionary period, the maximum of active and conscious participation and the maximum of initiative by the masses in the task of social creation.



Read again Lenin's articles and speeches of 1917 and you will discover that their master thought, "all power to the soviets," amounted then to the following: 1. the direct and active participation of the masses in the management of production and public affairs; 2. the obliteration of all gaps between the directors and the directed, that is, the suppression of any social hierarchy; 3. the greatest possible unification of legislative and executive powers, of the production apparatus and the administrative apparatus, of the State mechanism and the mechanism of local administration; 4. the maximum of activity by the masses and the minimum of liberty for its elected representatives; 5. the total suppression of all bureaucracy.

Parliamentarism was repudiated not only as the arena where two enemy classes collaborate politically and engage in "pacific" combats, but also as a mechanism of public administration. And this repudiation was motivated, above all, by the antagonism arising between this unlimited mechanism and the unbounded revolutionary activity of the masses intervening directly in administration and production.

In August 1917, Lenin wrote:

"The workers, having conquered political power, will break up the old bureaucratic apparatus, they will shatter it to its very foundations, until not one stone is left upon another: and they will replace it with a new one consisting of the same workers and employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats will at once be undertaken, as pointed out in detail by Marx and Engels: 1. not only electiveness, but also instant recalls; 2. payment no higher than that of ordinary workers; 3. immediate transition to a state of things when *all* fulfil the functions of control and superintendence, so that *all* become 'bureaucrats' 'for a time, and *no one*, therefore can become a 'bureaucrat.'" (*The State and Revolution*, page 103, early Russian edition.)

He wrote of the "*substitution of a universal popular militia for the police*," of the electiveness and recall at any moment of all functionaries and commanding ranks," of "workers' control in its primitive sense, direct participation of the people at the courts, not only in the shape of a jury but also by the suppression of specializing prosecutors and defense counsels and by the vote of all present on the question of guilt." That is how the replacement of the old bourgeois democracy with the soviet regime was interpreted in theory—and sometimes in practice.

It was this conception of "all power to the soviets" that was presented in the first constitution—adopted at the third soviet congress on the initiative of V. Trountovsky. It recognized the complete power of the communal soviet within the limits of the "volost", the power of the district soviet within the bounds of the "ouyezd," that of the provincial soviet within the limits of the "gubernia," while the unifying functions of each of the higher soviet organs expressed themselves in the levelling of the differences arising among the organs subordinated to it.

Anticipating the argument that such extreme federalism might undermine national unity, Lenin wrote in the same brochure:

"Only people full of petty-bourgeois 'superstitious faith' in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state for the destruction of centralism. But will it not be centralism if the proletariat and poorest peasantry take the power of the state in their own hands, organize themselves freely into communes, and unite the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, in the transfer of private property in railways, factories, land and so forth, to the entire nation, to the whole of society? Will that not be centralism? (Page 50, early Russian edition.)

Reality has cruelly shattered all these illusions. The "Soviet

State" has not established electiveness and recall at any moment of public officials and the commanding staff. It has not suppressed the professional police. It has not assimilated the courts in direct jurisdiction by the masses. It has not done away with social hierarchy in production. It has not lessened the total subjection of the local community to the power of the State. On the contrary, in proportion to its evolution, the Soviet State shows a tendency in the opposite direction. It shows a tendency toward intensification of the centralism of the State, a tendency toward the utmost possible strengthening of the principles of hierarchy and compulsion. It shows a tendency toward the development of a more specialized apparatus of repression than before. It shows a tendency toward the greater independence of the usually elective functions, the annihilation of the control of these functions by the elector masses. It shows a tendency toward the total freedom of the executive organisms from the tutelage of the elective functions on which they depend. In the crucible of reality, the "power of the soviets" has become the "soviet power," a power that originally issued from the soviets but has steadily become independent from the soviets.

We must believe that the Russian ideologists of the soviet system have not renounced entirely their notion of a non-Statal social order, the aim of the revolution. But as they see matters now, the road to this non-Statal social order no longer lies in the progressive atrophy of the functions and institutions that have been forged by the bourgeois State, as they said they saw things in 1917. Now it appears that their way to a social order that would be free from the State lies in the hypertrophy—the excessive development—of these functions and in the resurrection under an altered aspect, of most State institutions typical of the bourgeois era. The shrewd people continue to repudiate democratic parliamentarism. But they no longer repudiate, at the same time, those instruments of State power to which *parliamentarism is a counterweight within bourgeois society*: bureaucracy, police, a permanent army with commanding cadres that are independent from the soldiers, courts that are above control by the community, etc.

The State of the transitional revolutionary period, in contrast to the bourgeois State, ought to be an apparatus for the "repression of the minority by the majority." Theoretically, it should be a governmental apparatus resting in the hands of the majority. In reality, it, the soviet State, continues to be, as in the past, a government apparatus resting in the hands of a minority. (Of an other minority, of course.)

Little by little, the "power of the soviets" is replaced with the power of a certain party. Little by little the party becomes the essential State institution, the frame work and axis of the whole system of "soviet republics."

The evolution traversed by the idea of the "Soviet State" in Russia ought to enable us to understand the psychologic bases of this idea in countries where the revolutionary process of today is yet in its initial phase.

The "soviet regime" becomes the means of bringing into power and maintaining in power a revolutionary minority that claims to defend the interests of a majority, though the latter has not recognized these interests as its own, though this majority has not attached itself sufficiently to these interests to defend them with all its energy and determination.

This is demonstrated by the fact that in many countries—it happened also in Russia—the slogan "all power to the soviets" is launched in opposition to the already existing soviets, created during the first manifestations of the revolution. The slogan is directed, in the first place, against the majority of the working



class, against the political tendencies which dominated the masses at the beginning of the revolution. The slogan "all power to the soviets" becomes a pseudonym for the dictatorship of an extremist minority of the proletariat. So that when the failure of July 3, 1917, had brought to the surface the obstinate resistance of the soviets to Bolshevik pressure, Lenin tore off the disguise in his pamphlet: *On the Subject of Slogans* and proclaimed that the cry "all power to the soviets" was thenceforward out of date and had to be replaced with the slogan: "All power to the Bolshevik Party."

But this "materialization" of the symbol, this revelation of its true content, was only a moment in the development of the perfect political form, "finally discovered" and possessing exclusively the capacity of bringing out the social substance of the proletarian revolution.

The retention of political power by the minority of a class (or classes), by a minority organized as a party and exercising its power in the interests of the class (or classes), is a fact that arises from antagonisms typical of the most recent phase of capitalism and thus constitutes a principle difference between the old revolutions and the new. On the other hand, the fact of the dictatorship by a minority is a bond of kinship between the present revolution and those of the past historic period. If that is the basic principle of the governmental mechanism in question, it hardly matters if the exigency of given historic circumstances have made this principle assume the particular form of soviets.

The events of 1792-1794 in France offer an example of a revolution that was realized by means of a minority dictatorship set up as a party: the Jacobin dictatorship. The Jacobin party embraced the most active, the most "leftward," elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, of the proletariat, of declassed intellectuals. It exercised its dictatorship through a network of multiple institutions: communes, sections, clubs, revolutionary committees. In this network, producers' organizations on the style of our workers' soviets were completely absent. Otherwise, there is a striking similarity and a number of perfect analogies between the institutions used by the Jacobins and those serving the contemporary dictatorship. The party cells of today differ in no way from the Jacobin clubs. The revolutionary committees in 1794 and 1919 are entirely alike. The committees of poor peasants of today bear comparison with the committees and clubs, composed especially of poor elements, on which the Jacobin dictatorship based itself in the villages. Today, workers' soviets, factory committees, trade union centers, mark the modern revolution with their stamp and give it its specific character. Here is where the influence of the proletariat in the large industries of today makes itself felt. Nevertheless, we see that such specifically class organisms, such specifically proletarian formations, issued from the milieu of modern industry, are as much reduced to the role of mechanical instruments of a party minority dictatorship as were the auxiliaries of the Jacobin dictatorship in 1792-1794, though the social origins of the latter were entirely different.

Placed in the concrete conditions of contemporary Russia, the Bolshevik party dictatorship reflects, in the first place, the interests and aspiration of the proletarian elements of the population. This would be truer in the case of soviets that would arise in advanced industrial countries. But the nature of the soviets, their character, their adaptation to producers' organizations, do not possess here a preponderant part. We saw that after the 3rd of July, 1917, Lenin envisaged the *direct* dictatorship of the Bolshevik party, outside of the soviets. We see now that in certain places such a dictatorship is fully realized through the channel of revolutionary committees and party cells. All of this

does not stop the party dictatorship (direct or indirect) from preserving in its class policy a primordial lien with the proletariat and reflecting, above all, the interests and aspirations of the city laboring population.

On the other hand, as organizational cadres, the soviets may find themselves filled with elements that have a different class character. At the side of the workers' soviets rise soviets of soldiers and peasants. So that in countries that are even more backward economically than Russia, the power of the soviets may represent something other than a proletarian minority. It may represent there a peasant minority, or any other non-proletarian section of the population.

The mystery of the "soviet regime" is now deciphered. We see now how an organism that is supposedly created by the specific peculiarities of a labor movement corresponding to the highest development of capitalism is revealed to be, at the same time, suitable to the needs of countries knowing neither large capitalist production, nor a powerful bourgeoisie, nor a proletariat that has evolved through the experience of the class struggle.

In other words, in the advanced countries, the proletariat resorts to the soviet form of the dictatorship as soon as its élan toward the social revolution strikes against the impossibility of realizing its power any other way than through the *dictatorship of a minority*, a minority within the proletariat itself.

The thesis of the "finally discovered form," the thesis of the political form that, belonging to the specific circumstances of the imperialist phase of capitalism, is the only form that can realize the social enfranchisement of the proletariat, constitutes the *historically* necessary illusion by whose effect the revolutionary section of the proletariat renounces its belief in its ability to pull behind it the majority of the population of the country and resuscitates the idea of the minority dictatorship of the Jacobins in the very form used by the bourgeois revolution of the 18th century. Must we recall here that this revolutionary modality has been repudiated by the working class to the extent that it has freed itself from its heritage of petty-bourgeois revolutionarism?

As soon as the slogan "soviet regime" begins to function as a pseudonym under the cover of which the Jacobin and Blanquist idea of a minority dictatorship is reborn in the ranks of the proletariat, then the soviet regime acquires a universal acceptance and is said to be adaptable to any kind of revolutionary overturn. In this new sense, the "soviet form" is necessarily devoid of the specific substance that bound it to a definite phase of capitalist development. *It now becomes a universal form, suiting any revolution that is accomplished in a situation of political confusion, when the popular masses are not united, while the bases of the old regime have been eaten away in the process of historic evolution.*

Translated by Galetin

## REFORM OR REVOLUTION

• Rosa Luxemburg

(Conclusion)

But after the development of the class struggle and the development of its social conditions had led to the abandonment of these theories and to the elaboration of the principles of scientific socialism, there could be no socialism—at least in Germany—outside of Marxist socialism, and there could be no socialist class struggle outside of the Social-Democracy. From then on, socialism and Marxism, the proletarian struggle for emancipation and the Social-Democracy, were identical. That is why the return to pre-Marxist socialist theories no longer signifies today a re-



turn to the seven-league boots of the childhood of the proletariat but a return to the puny worn-out slippers of the bourgeoisie.

Bernstein's theory was the *first*, and at the same time, the *last* attempt to give a theoretic base to opportunism. It is the last because in Bernstein's system, opportunism has gone—negatively through its reunciation of scientific socialism, positively through its marshalling of every bit of theoretic confusion possible—as far as it can. In Bernstein's book, opportunism has crowned its theoretic development (just as it completed its practical development in the position taken by Schippel on the question of militarism) and reached its last consequences.

Marxist doctrine can not only refute opportunism theoretically. It alone can explain opportunism as an historic phenomenon in the development of the party. The forward march of the proletariat, on a world historic scale, to its final victory is not, indeed, "as simple a thing." The peculiar character of this movement resides precisely in the fact that here, for the first time in history, the popular masses themselves, *in opposition* to the ruling classes, are to impose their will, but they must effect this outside of the present society, beyond the existing society. This *will* the masses can only form in a constant struggle against the existing order. The union of the broad popular masses with an aim reaching beyond the existing social order, the union of the daily struggle with the great world transformation, that is the task of the Social-Democratic movement, which must logically grope on its road of development between the following two rocks: abandoning the mass character of the party or abandoning its final aim, falling into bourgeois reformism or into sectarianism, anarchism or opportunism.

In its theoretic arsenal, Marxist doctrine furnished, more than half a century ago, arms that are effective against both of these two extremes. But because our movement is a mass movement and because the dangers menacing it are not derived from the human brain but from social conditions, Marxist doctrine could not assure us, in advance, and once for always, against the anarchist and opportunist tendencies. The latter can be overcome only as we pass from the domain of theory to the domain of practice, but only with the help of the arms furnished us by Marx.

"Bourgeois revolutions," wrote Marx a half century ago, "like those of the eighteenth century, rush onward rapidly from success to success, their stage effects outbid one another, men and things seem to be set in flaming brilliants, ecstasy is the prevailing spirit; but they are short-lived, they reach their climax speedily, and then society relapses into a long fit of nervous reaction be-

fore it learns how to appropriate the fruits of its period of feverish excitement. Proletarian revolution, on the contrary, such as those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished, in order to start anew; scorn with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses and meannesses of their first attempts; seem to throw down their adversary only to enable him to draw fresh strength from the earth and again to rise up against them in more gigantic stature; constantly recoil in fear before the undefined monster magnitude of their own objects—until finally that situation is created which renders all retreat impossible, and conditions themselves cry out: "Hic Rhoduc, hic salta! Here is the rose. And here we must dance!"

This has remained true even after the elaboration of the doctrine of scientific socialism. The proletarian movement has not as yet, all at once, become social-democratic, even in Germany. But it is becoming more social-democratic, surmounting continuously the extreme deviations of anarchism and opportunism, both of which are only determining phases of the development of the Social-Democracy, considered as a process.

For these reasons we must say that the surprising thing here is not the appearance of an opportunist current but rather its feebleness. As long as it showed itself in isolated cases of the practical activity of the party, one could suppose that it had a serious practical base. But now that it has shown its face in Bernstein's book, one can not help but exclaim with astonishment: "What? Is that all you have to say?" Not the shadow of an original thought! Not a single idea that was not refuted, crushed, reduced into dust, by Marxism several decades ago!

It was enough for opportunism to speak out to prove it had nothing to say. In the history of our party that is the only importance of Bernstein's book.

Thus saying goodbye to the mode of thought of the revolutionary proletariat, to dialectics and to the materialist conception of history, Bernstein can thank them for the attenuating circumstances they accord to his conversion. For only dialectics and the materialist conception of history, magnanimous as they are, could make Bernstein appear as an unconscious predestined instrument, by the means of which the rising working class expresses its momentary weakness but which, upon closer inspection, it throws aside contemptuously and with pride.

*Translated by S. Galetin*

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